Solidarity With Kazakhstan

Workers Sacked for Protesting Women's Hostel Closure

Anarchists in Sudan

BLACK STAR

FROM BLOODY SUNDAY

TO MARIKARA

This year, the 30th of January, marks half a century since the events of Bloody Sunday when British soldiers murdered fourteen innocent people on the streets of Derry. The event will be marked by now divided commemorative activities, splintered along lines drawn largely in response to the findings of the Saville Inquiry published in 2010. Despite the divisions, there remains a shared belief that Bloody Sunday shows the particular brutality of the British government in Ireland.

We as anarchists take a different view. Firstly, the events in Derry were actually Ireland's third Bloody Sunday, the first (and least remembered or commemorated), was in 1913, during the brutal lockout of Dublin's workers. Hundreds were injured and several killed in police baton charges, the events being named after the attack on workers in Tsarist Russia in 1905 when hundreds were slaughtered by government forces.

That, in itself demonstrates that all governments use massacres as just another repressive tool of the state. What happened in Derry in 1972 was not only preceded by a litany of organised state killings, but followed by many as well.

This year, for example, also marks the tenth anniversary of the Marikara massacre of striking miners in South Africa in which thirty-four workers were shot dead by the South African police. Interestingly, African National Congress spokesmen, including leading policemen have been chosen to give the annual Bloody Sunday lecture in the past. Appropriate perhaps, if not in the way intended by the organisers.

'A dastardly criminal act' Cyril Ramaphosa on the wildcat strike of South African miners in 2012. 34 strikers were subsequently shot dead.

Elections, Sea Borders, Threats and Violence?

As UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss entered renewed talks on the Northern Ireland Protocol, having already threatened to invoke Article 16 if she doesn't get her way, the DUP threat to topple the Assembly if the Irish Sea Border isn't got rid of remains. Loyalist violence, blamed on the imposition of the same Irish Sea Border, which for them undermines the status of the Union guaranteed by the Good Friday Agreement (as long as a majority wanted it), erupted last summer. Could a repeat be on the cards if the Sea Border remains?

It's hard to see a way forward. If the Irish Sea Border is scrapped then there is the real possibility of a hard land border between the UK and the EU, more to the point between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. That also breaks the Good Friday Agreement of course. That however is not a likely outcome. Either way threats abound. Truss invoking Article 16, the DUP toppling the Assembly, loyalists resorting to violence. It seems our colonial overlords in Westminster really didn't give a flying fuck about the wee north's peace process when they rushed into Brexit.

In a strange twist of fate the Shinners have been demanding 'progressive' reforms from the same (once?) imperial government in Westminster. Other legislation was brought in over the heads of our local communal bigots: civil partnerships; same sex marriage; legalisation of abortion. While many applauded these acts of what could be termed benign imperialism, they have not gone without resistance. The implementation of safe and free abortion services has been turned into a complete shitshow due to (mainly) unionist obstruction. The cost to those needing abortion services has been high.

The 'anti-imperialist' DUP are also threatening to collapse the Assembly if Westminster goes forward with implementing Irish language legislation. This is of course something that Sinn Féin have demanded, under threat of toppling the Assembly, from the 'Brits' (not the loyalists). As far as the DUP threats go, well, loyalists don't believe or trust them, and the political representatives of the middle-class seem to just want to get on with the job of delivering our particular form of sectarian Home Rule.

Loyalists have daubed 'DUP Out - GFA RIP' graffiti on walls all over the place. They don't trust the DUP (and they have certainly never really trusted Westminster) to defend what they have referred to as 'British sovereignty' and their status 'within the United Kingdom.' A 3,000 strong protest in Belfast last June was told that this sovereignty and status was 'in its greatest danger since the state of Northern Ireland was created 100 years ago.' A spokesperson for the Unionist and Loyalist Unified Coalition declared 'people of our generation didn't go to jail and fill graveyards to see Sinn Féin rule the country and our sovereignty shredded.' Sinn Féin, along with the ghost of the 'RA, the Dublin government and Biden's administration, are apparently pulling the strings of British (English?) Imperialism. The Unionist *Newsletter*, talking about the lack of strength of Loyalism sounded more anti-imperialist than Sinn Féin does these days:

Yet aggrieved working class loyalists cannot inflict defeat upon their political enemies at Westminster… long before the Irish Sea border, British party politics has been almost entirely managed without Northern Ireland.

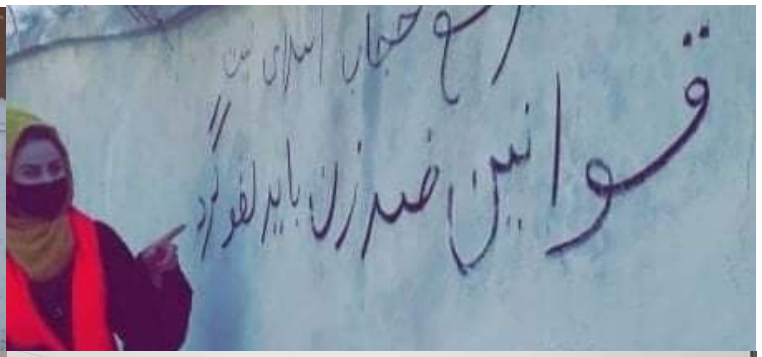
Before the 12th, Loyalists stood in front of a bonfire in Portadown which had a banner declaring that it is 'Better to die on your feet than live on your knees.' We concur but truth be told we are ideologically a bit closer to aul Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919) - the Mexican revolutionary who famously declared those words.

The working class as a whole, not only working class 'loyalists', are indeed being ignored. None of us have seen any meaningful peace dividend. Working class people are been ground into the dirt. Our lives are more and more disempowered, economically worse off than ever before, while the rich get richer and richer at our expense. Zapata fought against this type of injustice, against greedy landlords and parasites. Loyalism is a dead end for its working class adherents just as Republicanism/Nationalism is also a dead end. As for borders and states we are opposed to all of them.

Our cost of living is going through the roof, jobs are more and more precarious, we are kept in ignorance, fear and poverty, pitted against one another by a system built on the entrenchment of communal sectarian politics. Working class communities are getting nothing. Worse than nothing they are being destroyed.

Indeed it is better to live on our feet than die on our knees. But fighting for worn out empires or nationalism isn't living - its dying for the same shower of shit that want to keep us on our knees!

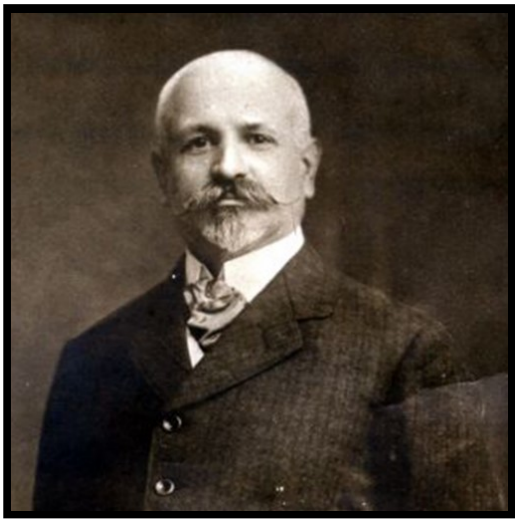
Afghanistan: Writing on the Walls



The writing is on the wall. The Taliban will fall. 'Bread, work, freedom', 'Anti-women laws must be abolished', 'I am a woman, work and education are my rights', 'We women don't recognise the Taliban government'.

Workers Protesting Women's Hostel Closure Blamed On Hostel Closure!

In a bizarre twist, workers staging a protest and work-in in opposition to the closure of Belfast's only hostel for women, have been blamed on causing the closure of the hostel they are struggling to keep open! The management committee planned to close Regina Coeli House next Spring, but have brought forward their plans. The workers have been dismissed and the remaining residents are being evicted by the management committee of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive funded Legion of Mary-run hostel. Using the excuse that workers fighting their plans are the cause of the eviction of remaining residents, and as the reason to sack them, is a truly unbelievable twisting of reality by the bosses.



10 Jan 1859 Spanish educator and anarchist, Francisco Ferrer i Guardia was born. He developed the idea of the "Modern School": radical, secular education particularly for working class children, and was, as a result later framed and executed by the state.

We must destroy all which in the present school answers to the organisation of constraint, the artificial surroundings by which children are separated from nature and life, the intellectual and moral discipline made use of to impose ready-made ideas upon them, beliefs which deprave and annihilate their natural inclination.

Organise!

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Just Books Peoples Library & Belfast Anarchist Assembly

Just Books - Belfast Anarchist Collective recently moved into a new space in Blackstaff Mill on the Springfield Road. Over the last couple of months we've been gathering the *Just Books Peoples* Library back together from the various locations its been stored since the closing of the *Réalta* space in King Street in August 2019. While we were in Berry Street (2016-2018) the library grew rapidly to thousands of books. Of course it has been a longer process than that, the library has been built up over many years. *Just Books* and the collective have a history stretching back to the *Belfast Anarchist Collective* and the original anarchist bookshop and space in Winetavern Street opened in 1978.

Now affiliated to Organise! the current collective feel that it is both an achievement and a pleasure to be able to make this collection of radical books publicly available again.

The *Just Books - Belfast Anarchist Collective* are also about to publish their first book, a reprint of Maximoff's Constructive Anarchism, through their new publishing venture *Just Books Publishing*. As a delegate for the collective told Black Star:

The Covid pandemic slowed our efforts to find a new space but we found somewhere to give a home to the Just Books Peoples Library which is important in making it accessible to people. We are also looking forward to the forthcoming publication of our first book.

The collective are working on making the place as comfortable as possible as it will function as a reading room and space for small gatherings and discussions. Books, magazines and pamphlets held will be available to be read on-site by appointment in the very near future. They aren't operating a lending service this time around and materials can't be removed from the space. This is the unfortunate result of a number of books going missing from both Berry Street and *Réalta* spaces when books were taken off the premises - never to be returned. It is important that this material is available to whoever wants to access it.

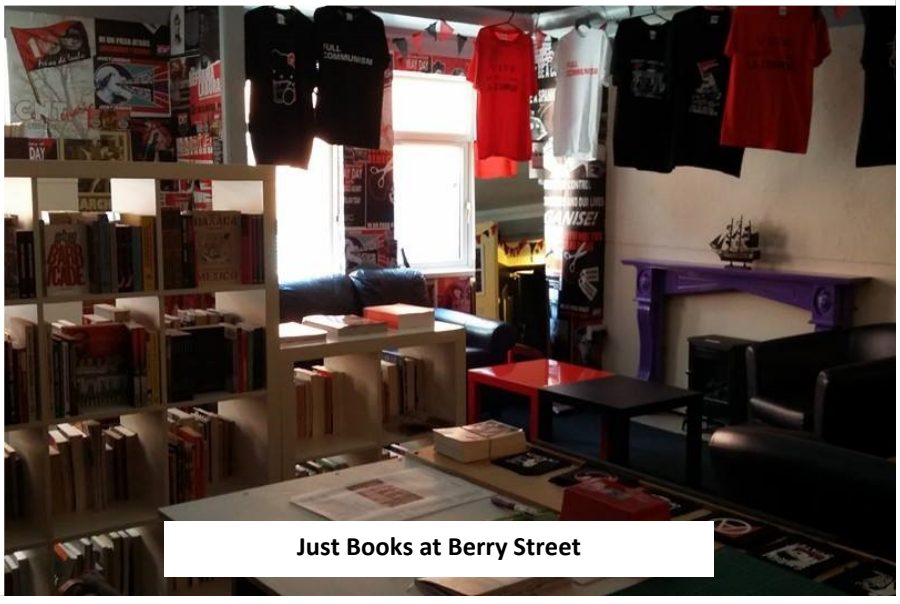
Work in progress at the new Just Books space.

So, when can we expect the space to be opened. The answer is *'very soon':*

We are putting the finishing touches to the space and hope to have it open for people to drop in by appointment and for small gatherings and discussions.

One idea we are pursuing is the setting up of a regular Belfast Anarchist Assembly open to all the class struggle anarchists in Belfast in order for us to come together, build solidarity and co-operation, discuss any differences openly and in a comradely manner and to help us all rebuild a vibrant and effective working-class anarchist movement across the city.

We don't want to pre-empt the structure of the Assembly and will be inviting others along to the first one to discuss exactly what we all believe it could do and how it would work.



Just Books at Berry Street

Class Struggle on the Rise?

As we seemingly emerge from the Covid crisis, some have noted an increased combativeness in workplaces across Britain and the wee North. From food production to logistics, local authorities to health & social care, education to manufacturing workers are stepping up their militancy and taking action against their bosses.

At Ulster Carpets workers are voting on strike action over the bosses refusal to backdate their pay deal. 3,500 Tesco lorry drivers and warehouse workers have been balloted over a shit pay deal. Unison is set to ballot local authority workers over pay. The UCU took strike action in December over pension cuts, pay and conditions. NIPSA Education Welfare Officers in the Education Authority began 15 days of strike action for pay parity with health and social care workers. In Portadown, workers at Glen Dimplex won a 13.5% pay increase and an additional payment in recognition of their work throughout the pandemic. They won this concession after taking 3 days of strike action, and with the threat to escalate the action if their demands were not met. These are just some of a larger number of ongoing struggles.

If workers are to build on what appears to be an upswell in militancy and struggle, we need to ensure that control of our struggle remains firmly in the hands of the workers involved. We need to build solidarity on the shop floor, across industry and in our communities creating a stronger movement that can counter any attempts by politicians and bureaucrats to stitch us up or sell us out.

On 9th January 1905 Louise Michel, Paris Communard, anarchist, teacher, revolutionary who had been exiled to prison in New Caledonia died in Marseilles.

We are Anarchists because it is absolutely impossible to obtain justice for all in any other way than by destroying institutions founded on force and privilege. We cannot believe that improvement is possible, if we still keep up the same institutions, now more rotten than in the past, or if we merely replace those whose iniquities are known with new men.

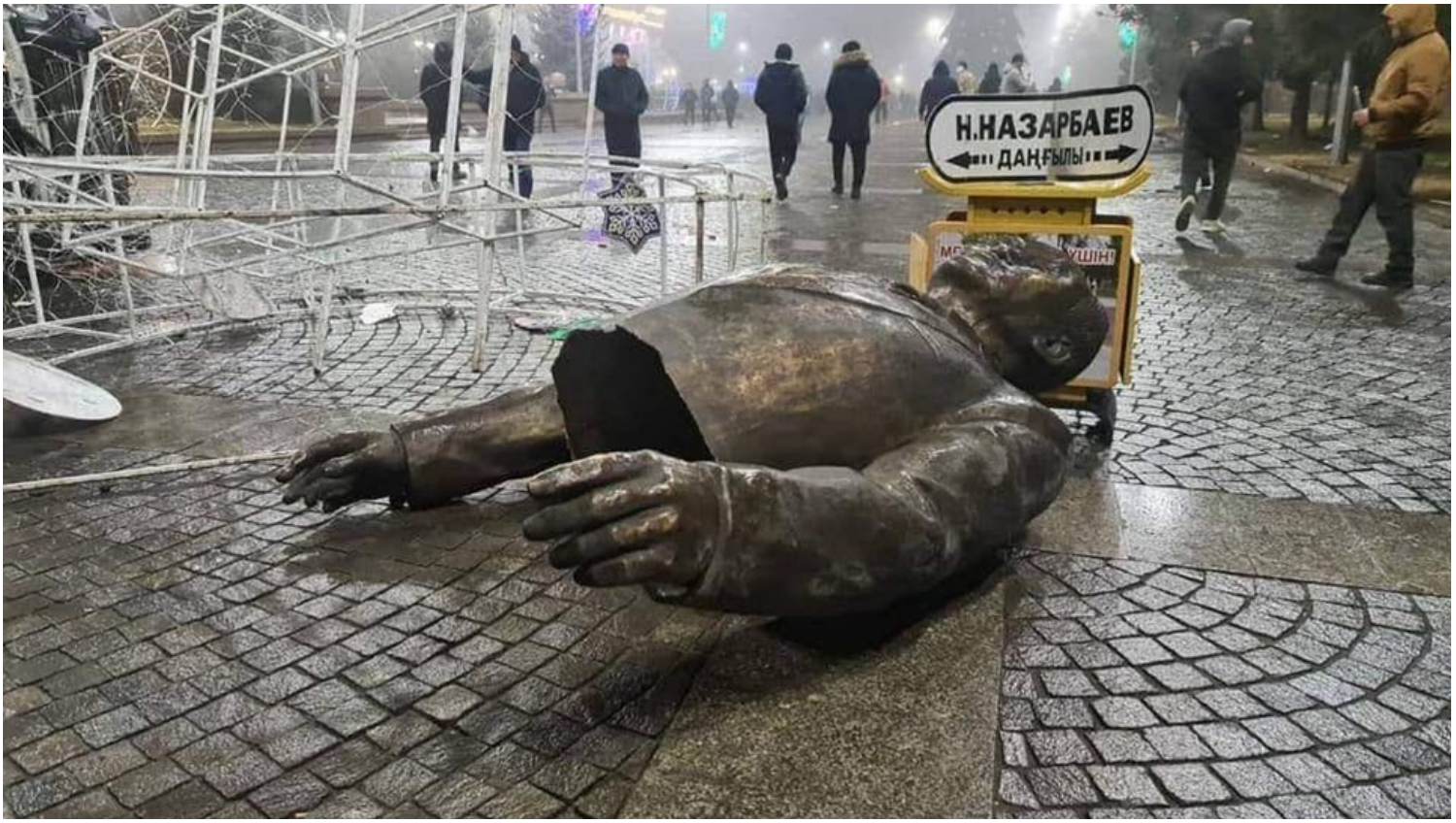
Meanwhile in Ballymena...

Things are getting wild strange round these parts.

Maybe there's something in the water, maybe we've all got a dose of Covid cabin-fever, but it seems UFO sightings have doubled in the last year. I mean doubled to 8 may not seem like much - but honestly, I cudda swore I saw something over Slemish the other week.

Mibbe I should stay off the poteen until Burn's night. Speakin' of which Burns' night in Ballymena still gathers a wee bit of interest here. A few of us will raise a dram to the bard and his message of universal brotherhood and sisterhood, poems celebrating the lives of workers, and opposition to absolute state power.

Statement in Solidarity with Revolt in Kazakhstan



On the 9th of January, the CNT-AIT (France), on the eve of Putin declaring victory over the workers revolt, published a message of solidarity with the protests of workers in Kazakhstan which they received from the International Workers' Association section in Russia KRAS-AIT.

The statement began:

The anarcho-syndicalists and anarchists of Russia express their full and complete solidarity with the social protest of the workers of Kazakhstan and send them their cordial greetings!

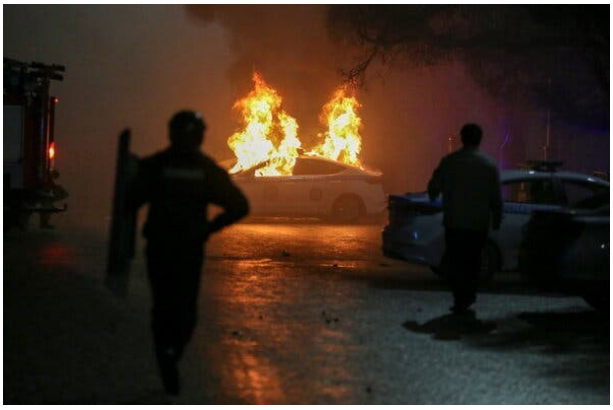
The statement referred to the 'explosion of social protest' across Kazakhstan as 'one of the most significant and brilliant since the start of the new century.' The protests are set in the context of the growing confidence of the working-class in Kazakhstan. Recovering from the 'terrible massacre of proletarians' in 2011 under the dictatorial Nazarbayev regime, workers went on to struggles for higher wages, to create Unions and other worker's organisations. This culminated in a wave of strikes by oil workers and workers in other industries across Kazakhstan. In the midst of poverty, ever increasing exploitation, rising prices, oppression and a strongly anti-Union and anti-worker regime, the last straw was the laying off of tens of thousands of oil workers in December 2021. Carried out under the pretext of 'fighting the pandemic' workers were left with no alternative but to resist.

A general strike began in the Mangisau region on 3rd January and quickly spread across Kazakhstan. In the former capital, Almaty, clashes erupted between workers and state forces and 'dozens if not hundreds' of people were killed and injured. The statement continues:

During the protests, disadvantaged people, mainly unemployed youth and internal migrants, carried out acts of popular expropriation, destroying many large shopping malls, stores and bank branches. In a number of cases, the troops refused to open fire on the rebels.

While recognising that the protests are 'spontaneous and uncoordinated' with 'a variety of often contradictory slogans and demands' the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists 'above all support those among them who have a distinct and unequivocal social orientation and clearly distinguish the strike and uprising in Kazakhstan from the many electoral protests and political coups of recent years.'

Demands have included the abolition of the rise in gas prices; a 100% salary increase; cancellation of the increased retirement age; measures to combat unemployment; abolition of compulsory vaccination against COVID-19, confinement and segregation measures which discriminate against the working-class. The government was brought down, and concessions were forced through by the scale and anger of the revolt. A drop in gas prices was declared along with a price freeze on 'socially



important' goods for 180 days, de facto dictator billionaire Nazarbayev was removed from his post as the head of the Security Council of Kazakhstan. But western oil companies intervened – insisting that President Tokayev 'restore the capitalist order.'

A state of emergency has been imposed, rallies and strikes have been banned, punitive operations against protestors and rioters have been launched, the blood of workers has been spilled and thousands have been arrested. Troops from a number of countries making up the military-political bloc led by the Russian Federation have arrived in the country to suppress social protests. These soldiers are called upon to carry out 'the role of policeman of world capital and to trample the flames of social rebellion to prevent its example, its slogans and its demands from spreading to other countries.'

As a result, the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists in Russia 'strongly condemn all repression of the social protests of the workers of Kazakhstan and the shameful foreign counter-revolutionary intervention carried out by the Kremlin.' They condemn attempts at manipulation of the protests of the workers by politicians and declare:

We stand firmly, resolutely and without the slightest hesitation on the side of the current social revolt in Kazakhstan and call on workers in Russia and around the world to show concrete solidarity with it.

On 17th January 1915 anarchist-communist, labour organiser, and IWW member Lucy Parsons lead a march against hunger and unemployment in Chicago:

'I am an anarchist.'

'Anarchists must know that a long period of education must precede any great fundamental change in society, hence they do not believe in vote begging, nor political campaigns, but rather development of self-thinking individuals.'

'Let us devastate the avenues where the rich live!'

Anarchists in Sudan

The popular uprising against the Sudanese military dictatorship has seen an increasingly key role played by local anarchist activists.

Working collectively since the revolution of December 2018 when the dictator, Omar Al Bashir, was finally overthrown, the Sudanese Anarchist Gathering emerged formally in 2020 maintaining pressure on the so-called transitional military council. However, in October 2021, a military coup dispensed with the political process and seized control of the country as anarchists had long since warned. The lies and deceit of the politicians proved second only to the brutality of the military and the revolutionaries continue to be targeted and killed, but they remain determined. A spokesperson declared just before Christmas as protests continued 'We're not giving up. The streets are brimming with defiance and opposition to them …We're still protesting and aiming to overthrow them…We ask for material support… we hope all anarchists in the world will support us'.

Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.

Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to pay for the natural resources; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore the website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com